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## Foreign Fruit Fly Suppression Program Grows in Hawaii

By [Kim Kaplan](#)  
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Fruit grower Hugo Butler of Kula, Maui, used to feed most of his peaches, loquats and persimmons to the hogs because the fruit was too fly-damaged to sell. But that changed once he joined the Agricultural Research Service ([ARS](#))-funded Hawaii Area- Wide Fruit Fly Integrated Pest Management ([HAW-FLYPM](#)) Program.

Today, Butler has a 96-percent improvement in his persimmon crop and reports raising amazing amounts of loquats and peaches. He is even growing perfect guavas for the first time--all without resorting to weekly pesticide spraying.

Before ARS, the [Hawaii Department of Agriculture](#) and the [University of Hawaii](#) Cooperative Extension Service partnered to develop this fruit fly suppression program to curb a quartet of exotic pests--

Mediterranean, oriental, Malaysian and melon fruit flies. Together, they used to turn more than 400 fruits and vegetables in Hawaii into maggot-infested, inedible mush unless farmers and gardeners relied on intense applications of organophosphate pesticides.

Now, five years after the HAW-FLYPM program began being demonstrated to the first few farmers on the big island of Hawaii, Butler is just one of more than 300 small and large growers across the islands who have reduced fruit fly infestation to less than 5 percent while cutting pesticide use by 75-90 percent.

Areawide pest control programs are most successful when many growers in an area participate, leaving few reservoirs from which the pest population can rebuild.

With the program successfully established, HAW-FLYPM is now beginning its final step. Its long-term management is being shifted from researchers to the growers themselves. ARS will continue to research new technologies for improving fruit fly control.

The [Entomological Society of America](#) recently honored the program with its [Dow AgroSciences](#) Integrated Pest Management Team Award, presented by the [Entomological Foundation](#). The award recognizes a collaborative team effort--involving industry and academic scientists--to control an insect pest.



A program to suppress fruit flies in Hawaii has helped growers increase yields. Here, Aloun Farms owner Mike Sou (left) and field manager Joseph Liu Man Hin point out fruit flies hiding in a banana tree to entomologist Roger Vargas. *Click the image for more information about it.*

ARS is the chief scientific research agency of the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#).

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